



Rehabilitation Expertise in the Chiropractic Profession: A Preliminary Survey

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Introduction

The chiropractic diplomate is an advanced standing designation given to doctors of chiropractic who have completed additional training and demonstrated skills consistent with their board of expertise. The American Board of Chiropractic Specialties (ABCS) works with each group - there are 14 - to develop and ensure high-quality programs that uphold high-standards of professional development. Our first aim will be to look for diagnosis trends among rehab specialists as it pertains to each body region. Our second aim will look into treatment approaches as explained by specialists. These approaches are hypothesized to be different and distinct from other council specialties and we'll look to better define services offered across the profession.

Methods

Survey:

During the 2018 ACA Rehab Symposium (Las Vegas), doctors in attendance were solicited for participation in a short paper survey. The survey consisted of 3 short answer questions and a visual analogue-scale question per four discussed body areas (cervicothoracic spine, lumbosacral spine, upper extremity, and lower extremity), for a total of 16 survey questions. The final page collected anonymous demographic information to identify respondents' level of expertise and advanced standing.

Categorization:

Two chiropractic rehabilitation experts evaluated responses for consensus-based, broad categorization of survey responses. In the event of disagreement following discussion, a third reviewer was available to resolve discrepancy.

Results

A total of 29 participants (n = 19 in the rehabilitation specialist group, n = 10 in the non-specialist group). Response rate to the purported questions was limited and varied among the respondents in both groups. Quantitative analysis of the codified responses presented difficulty due to the limited sample size and poor response rate. Qualitative analysis was therefore undertaken to identify utility of the survey tool, potential improvements in the survey tool, and critical assessment of the codifying methods used.

Each question was categorically explored based on current trends in chiropractic, exercise science, and rehabilitation medicine research. Based on question responses, patterns were discerned and assessed for intersubjectivity consensus assumed by reviewers. Throughout the review process, the conspicuous nature of responses facilitated clear agreement between initial reviewers and the third reviewer was not needed.

Survey Tool Limitations

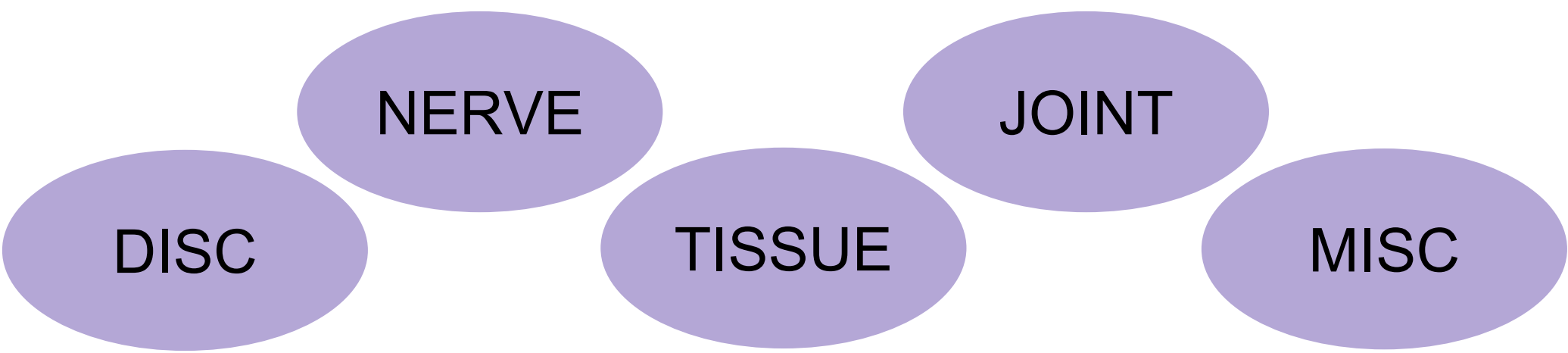
- Attendance at the conference varies year to year by providers - Expectation of imbalanced group numbers (less non-rehab providers likely)
- Small sample size associated with forced timing and schedule of conference
- Forced drop out of participants by the end of the survey due to length of survey and time constraint

Categorization

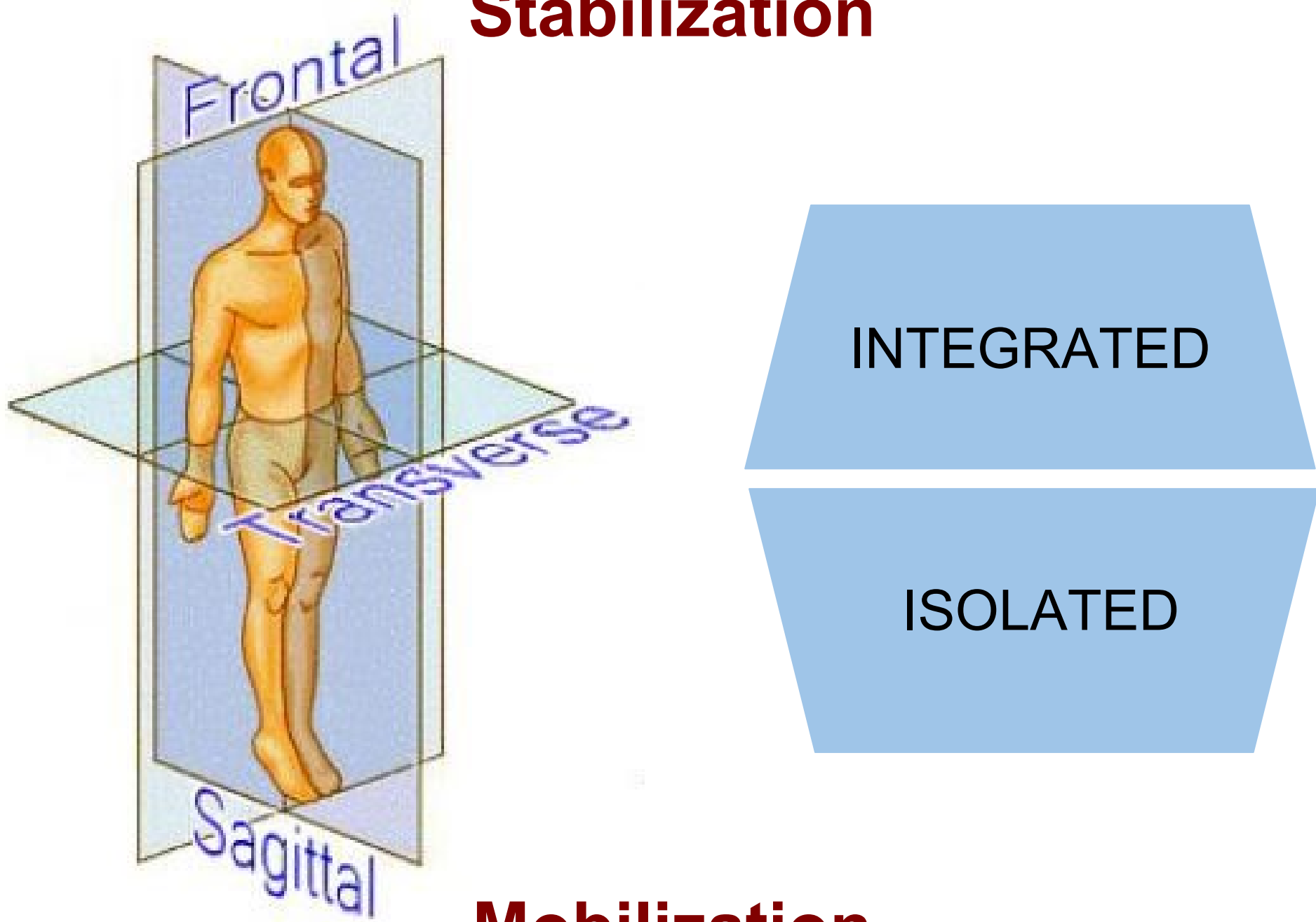
Chiropractors often diagnose neuromuscular conditions and are known for their expertise of musculoskeletal disorders. While there exists an emphasis on spine care, the presentation of many pain conditions necessitate the modern chiropractor be adept with the whole body; including the extremities. Below, we offer common categories revealed by respondents.

Diagnosis

While movement-related diagnoses (pathokinesiologic models) continue to gain popularity, the current approach is for chiropractors to diagnose based on the anatomy of pain-generating structures (pathoanatomic models).



Stabilization



Mobilization

MOBILIZING JOINT (CMT-D)	MUSCULAR STRETCH	INSTRUMENT ASSISTED STRETCHES	NEUROLOGIC FOCUSED THERAPIES
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Discussion

This paper demonstrates adequate methodology for stratifying survey responses by consensus agreement as a preliminary investigation for future empirical study. The study also adds clarity to the response answers typified by rehab specialists. Revision of the survey instrument to address the proposed barriers to optimized utilization is indicated. Further evaluation using a more developed survey tool is necessary to investigate differences in diagnosis and management of musculoskeletal disorders in chiropractic specialists and general chiropractic providers.

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